

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON, EDUCATOR

It was difficult for African Americans after the Civil War ended. Most had no money. When they were slaves, they received no money at all for their work. This meant that many could not afford to leave the

plantations on which they had served as slaves. In addition, most ex-slaves had no education. In many places, it was against the law to teach slaves to read and write, although many wanted to be educated.

After the war ended, some northern teachers came south to teach ex-slaves. Some of these teachers were sent south by the U.S. government. Others were sent by northern church groups. Some of the first students eventually became teachers themselves, and they, too, took on the job of teaching ex-slaves to read and write. By 1870, one of every two teachers in the South was an African American.



This photograph is a portrait of Booker T. Washington.

A Famous Tuskegee Teacher

In 1896, Booker T. Washington asked George Washington Carver to teach at Tuskegee Institute. George, too, had been born into slavery. Now, he was a scientist.

George taught the students at Tuskegee. He also worked on finding uses for certain southern crops. He knew that the more uses he could find, the more valuable a crop would become. In his lifetime of work, George found more than 300 uses for the peanut. In fact, he found ways to create from peanuts almost anything from soap to face powder. George also created 60 new products from pecans. And, he found 100 new ways to use a sweet potato. He also studied ways to save the soil and taught African American farmers how to improve the amount of crops they could grow and harvest.

What did ex-slaves think about having a chance to be educated? One student spoke for many when he told his teacher, "My Lord, ma'am, what a great thing learning is!"

Booker T. Washington Becomes a Teacher

Booker Taliaferro Washington believed in education for everyone. He worked hard to educate himself. Then, he worked hard to educate others.

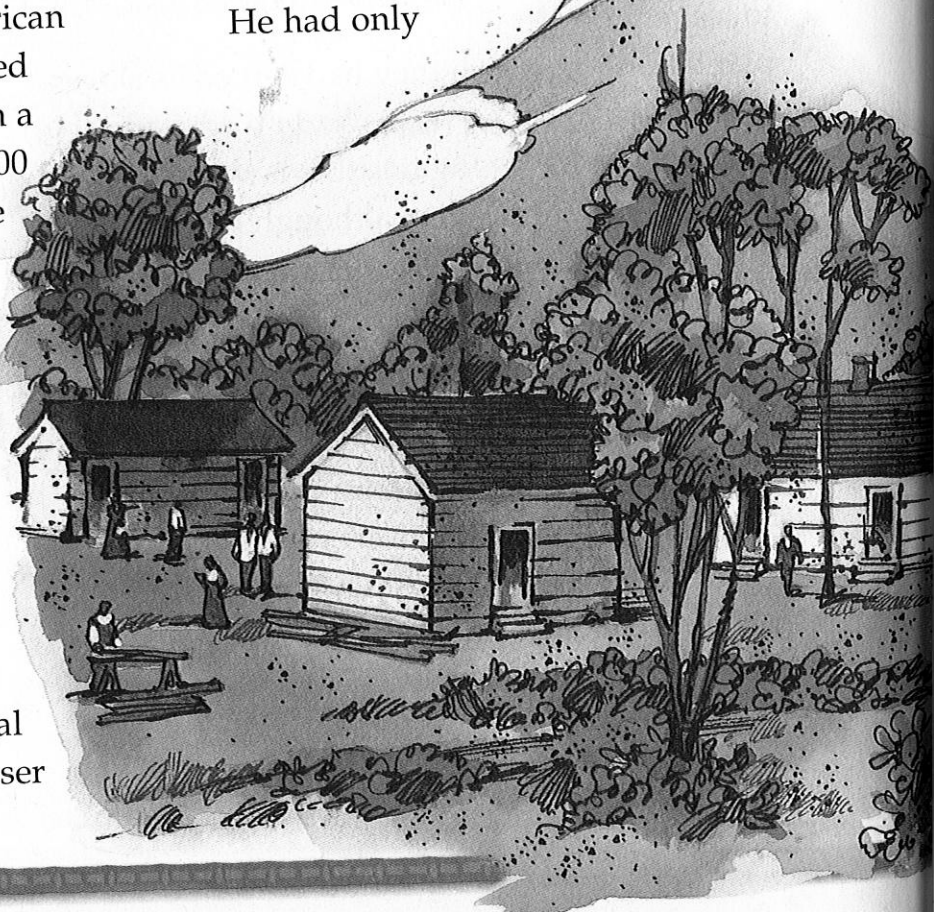
Booker was born into slavery in Virginia. He was 9 years old when the Civil War finally ended slavery. The Washington family, now free to leave, moved to West Virginia. There, Booker was able to go to the area's first school for African Americans. Booker helped the family by working in a salt mine from 4:00 to 9:00 every morning before he went to class. Later, he worked in a coal mine.

It was when Booker was down in the coal mine that he heard two miners talking about a new school for African Americans. Its name was the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. He moved closer

to the men and listened as they described a school that would teach African Americans a trade—a skill with which they could make a living. Here is what Booker thought about what he heard:

As they went on describing the school, it seemed to me that it must be the greatest place on earth. . . . I resolved at once to go to that school, although I had no idea where it was, or how many miles away, or how I was going to reach it; I remembered only that I was on fire constantly with one ambition, and that was to go to Hampton. This thought was with me day and night. . . .

Booker made his dream come true. In 1872, he arrived at the Hampton Institute. He had only





George Washington Carver is shown here teaching chemistry at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute.

50 cents in his pocket. He spent the next three years working as a janitor to pay for the cost of going to school there.

After Booker graduated from Hampton, he became a teacher. He taught children during the day, and he taught adults at night. He once said that, "Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn."

Booker T. Washington Starts a School

In 1879, Booker went back to the Hampton Institute, this time however, as a teacher.

After teaching at Hampton for two years, Booker started a brand-new school for African Americans.

It was called the Tuskegee (tuhs KEE gee) Normal and Industrial Institute. The name "Tuskegee" came from the Alabama town in which the school was located. Booker served as the school's principal. He also was a teacher there.

Booker knew that, in the United States at that time, black people did not have the same rights as white people. He felt that the way to get those rights was to learn a skill. With a skill, Booker believed an African American could work hard, save money, buy land, and become an economic force in the nation. To this end, Tuskegee taught African Americans how to be carpenters, printers, blacksmiths, and shoemakers.

When Booker started the Tuskegee Institute, the school was housed in a few tumbledown buildings. It had only 40 students and very little money. As the school's leader, Booker worked hard to make it a success. He tirelessly raised money for the school, from supporters in the North and the South.

All Booker's hard work paid off. By the time he died, in 1915, Tuskegee was a school of 100 buildings. It had over 1,500 students and almost 200 teachers.

The school's future was secured, because of the money Booker T. Washington had raised for it during his lifetime—almost \$2 million in all!

Through his work at the Tuskegee Institute, Booker gained the respect of people all over the nation. Presidents asked for his advice. He often spoke to congressional representatives about the treatment and hopes of America's black people.

Not everyone agreed with everything Booker did and said. For example, Booker did not fight segregation. Segregation is the separation of people because of their race, their religion, or some other reason. Much of the country had segregated African Americans because of their race.

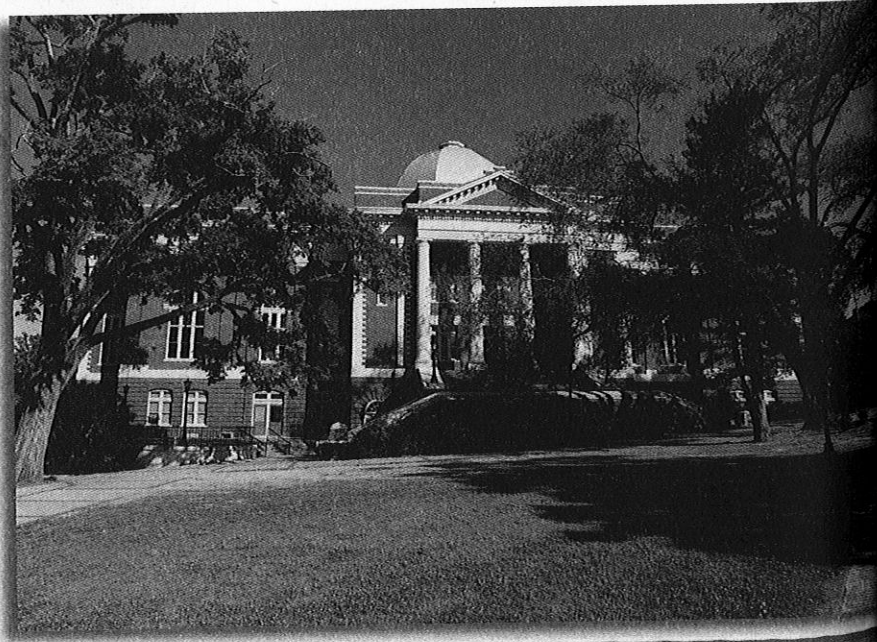
Booker said that the races could be separate sometimes. Though when it was for the good of the country, the races should work together. "In all things that are purely social," Booker said, "we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things

essential to mutual progress." This angered some people, who felt that blacks and whites should work together in all things. Yet, that would not happen for many years to come.

Booker's School Lives On

The Tuskegee Institute still exists today. It is known as Tuskegee University. Its new name reflects the fact that it now offers many courses in many subjects. For example, today's students can major in art or agriculture or engineering. Students can decide to become veterinarians or teachers or nurses. Also, Tuskegee University is no longer a school for only African Americans. Today, people of all races receive an education there.

This photograph shows Tompkins Hall (cafeteria and student union) at Tuskegee University as it looks today.



Show What You Know

1865-1900

Study this photograph of a history class being taught at Tuskegee Institute. Then, answer the questions based on what you see there.

1. Name three things you see in this photograph that you also could see in a modern-day classroom.



2. Name three things you see in this photograph that you probably wouldn't see in a modern-day classroom.

3. On the chalkboard, this history teacher has written about what happened to Captain John Smith. The chalkboard tells that the captain was a colonist at Jamestown. It says that Captain Smith was captured by Indians, and that his life was saved by an Indian woman named Pocahontas. Imagine you are a teacher. You have just told your class to read "Booker T. Washington, Educator." Write three important facts from the reading that you would choose to write on the chalkboard.
